

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1 (IMPODET)

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ECON, PL

SUBJECT: POLISH PRICE RISES: GIEREK'S RACTION TO RFE COMMENTARY

1. FOLLOWING THE JULY 4 CEREMONY AT THE SEJM (SEPTEL), FIRST SECRETARY GIEREK MADE SOME COMMENTS TO ME ON THE CURRENT CONCERNS OF THE POLISH REGIME. HE WAS ACTIVELY SECONDED BY VICE MARSHAL OF THE SEJM ANDRZEJ WERBLAN (PZPR) AND, SOMEWHAT LESS ACTIVELY, BY MARSHAL STANISLAW GUCWA (ZSL). THE DISCUSSION LASTED ABOUT TEN MINUTES.

2. GIEREK SAID THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE A GENERAL RECOGNITION IN THE WESTERCKPRESS, INCLUDING IN THAT OF THE U.S., THAT THE POLISH GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED PRICE-RISE MEASURES REPRESENTED A NECESSARY STEP. IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT MOST MEDIA COMMENTATORS TOOK A SYMPATHETIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS THOSE MEASURES, "EXCEPT FOR THE TOMFOOLERY OF RADIO FREE EUROPE, WHICH WILL FULLY DISTORTS THE SITUATION." HE WENT ON, "THEIS SURPRISES ME, BECAUSE FAILURE TO REFORM THE PRICE STRUCTURE WILL ONLY WEAKEN POLAND AND PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THGSE WHO DO NOT WANT OUR COUNTRY TO OCCUPY A SIGNIFICANT PLACE IN EUROPE. BUT I HAD THOUGHT THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT, MR. AMBASSADOR, AGREED THAT IT WAS GOOD IF POLAND'S POSITION WERE STRONGER, RATHER THAN WEAKER."

3. I SAID I COULD ASSURE HIM THAT THAT WAS THE VIEW OF MY GOVERNMENT AND NO ONE IN IT WISHED POLAND TO BECOME WEAKER. WE HAD PROVEN THIS BY THE ECONOMIC COLLABORATION AND

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CREDITS WE HAD OFFERED.

4. GIEREK SAID HE HAD READ THAT THE PRICE OF MEAT HAD RISEN BY 103 PERCENT IN THE U.S. OVER THE PAST TEN YEARS. IT WAS NOW ESSENTIAL THAT IT SHOULD RISE IN POLAND. I SAID I COULD NOT DISPUTE WITH HIM ABOUT THE DOMESTIC-ECONOMIC PROGRAM OF THE POLISH GOVERNMENT.

5. GIEREK SAID THAT POLAND HAD ENEMIES WHO WISHED TO KEEP HER WEAK AND DEPRIVE HER OF THE ABILITY TO MAKE HER VOICE COUNT IN EUROPE. "RFE STUPIDLY PLAYS INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE ENEMIES," HE SAID.

6. I SAID AGAIN THAT I COULD ASSURE HIM THAT NO ONE IN MY GOVERNMENT WANTED TO WEAKEN POLAND.

7. GIEREK SAID THAT, IF THE POLISH GOVERNMENT'S PRICE-REFORM PROGRAM COULD NOT BE SUCCESSFULLY EFFECTED, THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE UPHARMFUL NOT ONLY FOR POLAND, BUT, IN THE EYES OF ANYONE WHO WAS WISE ENOUGH TO TAKE A LONG VIEW, FOR "ALL THOSE WHO CONSIDER THAT IT IS IN THEIR INTEREST TO HAVE A STRONG POLAND IN THE CENTER OF EUROPE." CONCLUDING, HE SAID, "IF ONE IS FAR-SIGHTED, HE WOULD NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE REALIZATION OF SUCH CONSEQUENCES. IF YOU STUDY CAREFULLY MY SPEECH IN KATOWICE, YOU WILL FIND THAT IT CONTAINS ALL THE CORRECT ACCENTS TO CONVINCE YOU THAT I REALLY MEAN THIS."

8. ASSURING HIM ONCE MORE OF THE GOOD WILL OF MY GOVERNMENT, I TOLD GIEREK I WOULD TRANSMIT TO WASHINGTON THESE REMARKS OF HIS.

9. COMMENT: WHILE MOST OF THIS DISCOURSE WAS CONDUCTED IN A REASONABLE TONE, ALTHOUGH SERIOUSLY, GIEREK WAS BITTER AND A LITTLE SARCASTIC WHEN HE REFERRED TO RFE. OF COURSE, HE FINDS IT INCOMPREHENSIBLE THAT A RADIO STATION FINANCED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND OSTENSIBLY GOVERNED BY A BOARD APPOINTED IN PART BY THE PRESIDENT, SHOULD BROADCAST ANYTHING NOT CAREFULLY CALCULATED IN ADVANCE BY THAT GOVERNMENT FOR THE IMPACT IT WILL HAVE ON ITS AUDIENCE.

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10. WHILE HE NEVER SAID SO, AND CANNOT EVEN BE SAID TO HAVE IMPLIED THIS UNAMBIGUOUSLY, I INTERPRET HIS REMARKS AS AN EFFORT TO SUGGEST TO US THAT HIS OPPONENTS WITHIN THE COMMUNIST CAMP, AND EVEN IN THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP, ARE BEING GIVEN WEAPONS AGAINST HIM BY RFE. HE SEEMED TO BE SAYING THAT, DESPITE THE DRUBBING HE APPARENTLY RECEIVED FROM BREZHNEV DURING THEIR "FRANK AND CORDIAL" TALK IN BERLIN, HE HAD STRUCK TO HIS GUNS, AS SHOWN BY THE ALMOST

COMPLETE ABSENCE FROM HIS KATOWICE SPEECH OF COMMUNIST
TERMINOLOGY OR APPEALS TO COMMUNIST SHIBBOLETHS.

11. ALSO OF INTEREST IS THE IMPLICATION CONTAINED IN THE
REFERENCE TO "CONSEQUENCES," IN WHICH GIEREK APPEARED MXXMXXM
TO BE SUGGESTING THAT, IF HE FAILS AND IS REPLACED BY
BY SOMEBODY ELSE -- PRESUMABLY SOMEBODY HAND-PICKED BY
THE SOVIETS - WE OURSELVES WILL BE PARTIALLY TO BLAME
BECAUSE OF THE DESTRUCTIVE EFFECT OF RFE'S BROADCASTING.
END COMMENT.
DAVIES

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